

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received APR 10 1985

date entered MAY 9 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections**1. Name**

historic MILES PRATT HOUSE

and or common PRATT-ROBINSON-WRIGHT HOUSE

2. Location

street & number 106 Mt. Auburn St.

N/A not for publication

city, town Watertown

vicinity of

state Massachusetts

code

025

county

Middlesex

code

017

3. Classification**Category**☐ district
☒ building(s)
☐ structure
☐ site
☐ object**Ownership**☐ public
☒ private
☐ both**Public Acquisition**☐ in process
N/A being considered**Status**☒ occupied
☐ unoccupied
☐ work in progress
Accessible
☒ yes: restricted
☐ yes: unrestricted
☐ no**Present Use**☐ agriculture
☒ commercial
☐ educational
☐ entertainment
☐ government
☐ industrial
☐ military
☐ museum
☐ park
☐ private residence
☐ religious
☐ scientific
☐ transportation
☐ other:**4. Owner of Property**

name Pratt Realty Trust

street & number 106 Mt. Auburn St.

city, town Watertown

N/A vicinity of

state Massachusetts

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Middlesex Registry of Deeds

street & number 208 Cambridge St.

city, town E. Cambridge

state Massachusetts

6. Representation in Existing Surveystitle Watertown Historic Resources
Inventoryhas this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date September, 1982

☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☒ local

depository for survey records Watertown Dept. of Community Development and Planning

city, town Watertown

state MA

cont.

7. Description

Condition

☒ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Miles Pratt House, built ca. 1863, faces south on a suburban plot at the corner of Mt. Auburn and Palfrey Streets in Watertown, Massachusetts, about 3/10 of a mile from Watertown Square. The house is set back from the sidewalk about 20 to 25 feet. A driveway off Mt. Auburn Street passes along the house's east side and leads to a carriage house at the lot's rear. The lot was originally enclosed with a fine cast-iron Greek Revival fence; the granite gateposts and gate from this fence still remain.

The immediately surrounding neighborhood is residential, containing a mix of mid-nineteenth century to early twentieth century housing on moderate-sized suburban lots. A mid-twentieth century house is located next door.

While no prehistoric archeological sites are recorded in the immediate area of the Miles Pratt House, many sites are known along the Charles River, especially in the vicinity of Watertown Square, where a ford and fishwier were located. There is thus potential for prehistoric resources, since the house seems to have been the first building on the lot and ground disturbance may be minimal. Historic archeological resources likely to be evident on the property include refuse scatter and other subsurface features such as privies, trash pits, wells, or undocumented outbuildings.

The main block of the house is a gable-roofed, wood-frame structure, three bays wide and 2 1/2 stories tall. A large 2 1/2 story wing with a low pitched gable roof extends to the rear. Though the primary facade is traditionally balanced, the plan and side elevations are asymmetrically organized. The main block is clad in wide shiplap boards, while the wing is clapboarded. The foundations are original brick. The roof is sheathed in asphalt shingles.

The house displays some inventive and finely detailed characteristics of the Italianate style. The house's most distinguished feature is a bold scalloped canopy with turned drops, which shelters the main entry. This canopy forms the base of a small balustraded balcony above. The central door surround is composed of full-length sidelights and a transom glazed with etched glass. The deep eaves of the roof are supported on paired brackets.

The south-facing facade is three bays wide with a central entry, described above. The door is a twentieth-century replacement. Five windows are placed symmetrically around the entrance. The first-floor windows are long, with 6/6 double-hung sash and molded architraves, topped by pediments on carved consoles. The three second-floor windows have cornice lintels. All windows have footed sills. To the east of the main elevation is the end of a flat-roofed loggia.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Miles Pratt House, Watertown Item number 6

Page 1

Inventory of the Historic Assets of the Commonwealth, 1982,
Massachusetts Historical Commission, Boston, MA

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Miles Pratt House, Watertown

7

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

1

The east elevation of the main block is dominated by this loggia, which is supported on three chamfered posts and is embellished by the same scalloped motif found on the main entry. A single long window, like those on the south elevation, is sheltered by the loggia. Above the loggia is a band of three closely set round-arched windows. In the gable field is a round-arched window with a drip molding.

Next to the loggia is a one-story extension of the rear wing, with a flat, bracketed roof. On the south side of the extension is a long 4/4 window opening onto the loggia. The extension is five bays long and contains a simple central door with a two-light transom, flanked by two 6/6 windows to the south and two 4/4 windows to the north. On the second floor of the wing's east elevation is a three-sided bay with 6/6 sash on its diagonal faces.

A two-story projecting bay, basically rectangular in shape, is centrally placed on the west elevation of the main block. It is divided between the first and second stories by a convex copper roof that is supported by brackets. The bay is capped by a bracketed cornice with a broken pediment. On the first floor, the bay has three tall, narrow windows across its front and a single tall window on each side. The slightly smaller second story of the bay has windows with segmental arches that are arranged in the same manner. The gable field has the same round-arched window found on the east elevation.

Around the corner, on the main block's rear elevation, there is a single 2/2 window on the first floor and a three-sided oriel with a rounded copper roof on the second floor. The fenestration of the west elevation of the wing is irregular. A trellised arbor shelters the simple, central side entrance.

On the first floor of the wing's rear elevation is a narrow, off-center door with a two-light transom. It is flanked by two windows with 6/6 sash. The small window to the right of the door is a recent alteration. On the second floor, four 6/6 windows are evenly spaced but asymmetrically placed. In the gable field are paired windows with 6/6 sash surrounded by a footed architrave.

On the interior, the two primary public rooms are in the main block. A central hall, containing a cantilevered curving staircase, leads to the library and living room on the left and right respectively. In the library, interior finishes include an Eastlake-style walnut bookcase, which matches the surround and overmantel of the fireplace. The living room at one time had sliding pocket doors leading to the back parlor. In the wing are two more public rooms--the back parlor and dining room--each with fireplaces with late Greek Revival marble mantels. A kitchen and laundry are located to the rear. On the second floor are five rooms.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Miles Pratt House, Watertown

Item number

7

Page 2

The two-story frame carriage house (probably built at the same time as the house) is sheathed in clapboard and has a gable roof covered with asphalt shingles. The original façade of the structure has been altered by the installation of garage doors early in the twentieth century. Above the garage doors is a hay window.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
☐ prehistoric	☒ archeology-prehistoric	☐ community planning	☐ landscape architecture	☐ religion
☐ 1400-1499	☒ archeology-historic	☐ conservation	☐ law	☐ science
☐ 1500-1599	☐ agriculture	☐ economics	☐ literature	☐ sculpture
☐ 1600-1699	☒ architecture	☐ education	☐ military	☐ social/
☐ 1700-1799	☐ art	☐ engineering	☐ music	☐ humanitarian
☒ 1800-1899	☐ commerce	☐ exploration/settlement	☐ philosophy	☐ theater
☐ 1900-	☐ communications	☒ industry	☐ politics/government	☐ transportation
		☐ invention		☐ other (specify)

Specific dates ca. 1863 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Miles Pratt House, at 106 Mt. Auburn Street in Watertown, Massachusetts, possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship. The house is architecturally significant as Watertown's best example of high-style Italianate residential architecture. It is also significant for its associations with the local industrialist Miles Pratt, and for its role in the development of Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown's most fashionable residential artery in the second half of the nineteenth century. It meets Criteria A, B, and C for listing on the National Register of Historic Places on the local level.

The Miles Pratt House is significant as a rare example of high-style Italianate domestic architecture in Watertown. This well-preserved house retains all of its significant original features, including its shiplap board sheathing, intended to simulate stone, and its rich decorative trim on the main entry, windows, loggia, and cornice, which is an elegant exposition of the Italianate style. The complex plan, with its formal main block and large rear wing with service rooms beyond, the bay windows, the oriel, and the loggia are all important structural features of the Italianate style. Finally, the house has been carefully rehabilitated, and thus stands out as a symbol of good preservation practices in a community whose nineteenth-century housing stock has been overwhelmingly sided with unsympathetic modern materials.

Mt. Auburn Street has been a principal transportation axis through Watertown since prehistoric times, when it was the main trail from the Massachusetts Bay area to Connecticut. In the Colonial period, Watertown's civic center was located at Mt. Auburn and Belmont Streets, and in the Federal period, the Mt. Auburn Street corridor between Watertown and Cambridge became the location of a number of suburban estates. The town center shifted to Watertown Square early in the nineteenth century, but horse railway routes (beginning in 1857), and later, trolley lines along Mt. Auburn Street insured the continued suburban residential use of the street.

While Watertown was settled very early in the seventeenth century (original town grant 1630), it had limited growth until the early nineteenth century. With its location on the banks of the Charles River, close to the mercantile center of Boston, Watertown then became an important industrial and suburban town on the primary western corridor of Boston expansion.

According to a family memoir, Miles Pratt moved to the house at 106 Mt. Auburn Street, on the outskirts of the residential district surrounding Watertown Square, in approximately 1863. It is not clear whether he actually had the house constructed. Pratt was born in 1825, although little else is known of

9. Major Bibliographical References

Downing, A.F., MacDougal, E. and Pearson, E., Mid Cambridge: Survey of Architectural History in Cambridge, Cambridge Historical Commission, 1969.
Hodges, Mable, Crossroads on the Charles, Phoenix, N.H. 1980.
Whitney, Solon, Historical Sketches of Watertown, Massachusetts, Watertown, 1893.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 10,074 sq. ft.

Quadrangle name Newton, MA

Quadrangle scale 1:25,000

UTM References

A

1	9	3	2	0	4	6	0	4	6	9	2	6	8	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

F

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

G

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

H

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

Please refer to the attached surveyor's map. The boundaries coincide with those of the present ownership and include all of the important historic structures.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
<u>N/A</u>			

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mary Kate Sampson, Mass. Historical Commission with Heli S. Meltsner, Arch. Pres. Assoc.

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date April 13, 1984

street & number 80 Boylston St. telephone (617) 727-8470

city or town Boston state MA 02116

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Valerie A. Talmage
Executive Director, Mass. Historical Commission
title State Historic Preservation Officer

date March 21, 1985

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

for Melores Byers Entered in the
National Register

Keeper of the National Register

date 5-9-85

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination FormFor NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet Miles Pratt House, Watertown Item number 8

Page 1

his early life. By the mid 1850s, he had settled in Watertown, where he founded the Pratt Company, a manufacturer of iron stoves with its foundry and wharves on Galen Street at the Charles River. The Pratt Company is credited with production of some of the earliest effective coal and combination coal/wood stoves for residential use.

With the advent of the Civil War, the Pratt Company prospered and grew. During the war, the Watertown Arsenal contracted with the Pratt Company to produce cannonballs, shells, and gun-carriage casings. Up to 275 tons of iron per month were used in their production. In 1874, the company, which was still under Pratt's leadership, consolidated with the George Walker Company; it was incorporated as the Walker and Pratt Manufacturing Company in 1877. With new capital, the plant and business expanded to include the manufacture of heating and ventilating apparatus for institutions and businesses. The firm had retail stores in Boston and on the West Coast.

Miles Pratt was a civic as well as an industrial leader. He was instrumental in founding the Watertown Free Public Library. Pratt was also known as an ardent abolitionist. He died in 1882 at the age of 57.

After 1900, Pratt's daughter, Grace Pratt Robinson, and her husband, G. Frederick Robinson, lived in the house. Robinson and their daughter, Ruth Robinson Wheeler, coauthored Great Little Watertown, a simply written narrative of the history of Watertown, and the only history of the town to be published between 1893 and 1976. Watertown's population nearly doubled in the period from 1900 to 1915, with the influx largely due to Armenian, Irish, and Italian immigrants. Great Little Watertown was perceived as an accessible introduction to the town, designed for this expanding population.

The Miles Pratt House remained in the Pratt family throughout the twentieth century. In 1978, the house was donated to the First Parish Church of Watertown by Helen Robinson Wright. The First Parish Church sold the house to the present owner in 1982, placing a preservation restriction on the property to protect all of the significant exterior features of the house and carriage house. This was the first residence in Watertown to be subject to a preservation restriction. The Miles Pratt House has been rehabilitated for use as offices.

The site of the Miles Pratt House has potential significance as a prehistoric archeological site. If the grounds have been generally undisturbed, investigation could provide insights into prehistoric land use in the area surrounding the known fishweir at Watertown Square. The historic archeological significance of the house dates primarily to Pratt's residence. Significance lies in the potential for understanding the social and economic lifeways of the family of a wealthy local businessman.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Rec #
J5000980

Pratt, Miles, House
Middlesex County
MASSACHUSETTS

Working No. APR 10 1985

Fed. Reg. Date: 2/4/86

Date Due: 5/9/85 - 5/25/85

Entered in ~~the~~ the ACCEPT 5-9-85

National ~~Register~~ RETURN

REJECT

Federal Agency: _____

- ☐ resubmission
☐ nomination by person or local government
☐ owner objection
☐ appeal

Substantive Review: ☐ sample ☐ request ☐ appeal ☐ NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____

Reviewer _____

Discipline _____

Date _____

_____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: _____ technical corrections cited below
_____ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

7. Description

Condition	Check one	Check one
☐ excellent	☐ deteriorated	☐ original site
☐ good	☐ ruins	☐ moved date _____
☐ fair	☐ unexposed	
	☐ unaltered	
	☐ altered	

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- ☐ summary paragraph
☐ completeness
☐ clarity
☐ alterations/integrity
☐ dates
☐ boundary selection

8. Significance

Period Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- ☐ summary paragraph
- ☐ completeness
- ☐ clarity
- ☐ applicable criteria
- ☐ justification of areas checked
- ☐ relating significance to the resource
- ☐ context
- ☐ relationship of integrity to significance
- ☐ justification of exception
- ☐ other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References

Verbal boundary description and justification

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title

date

13. Other

- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



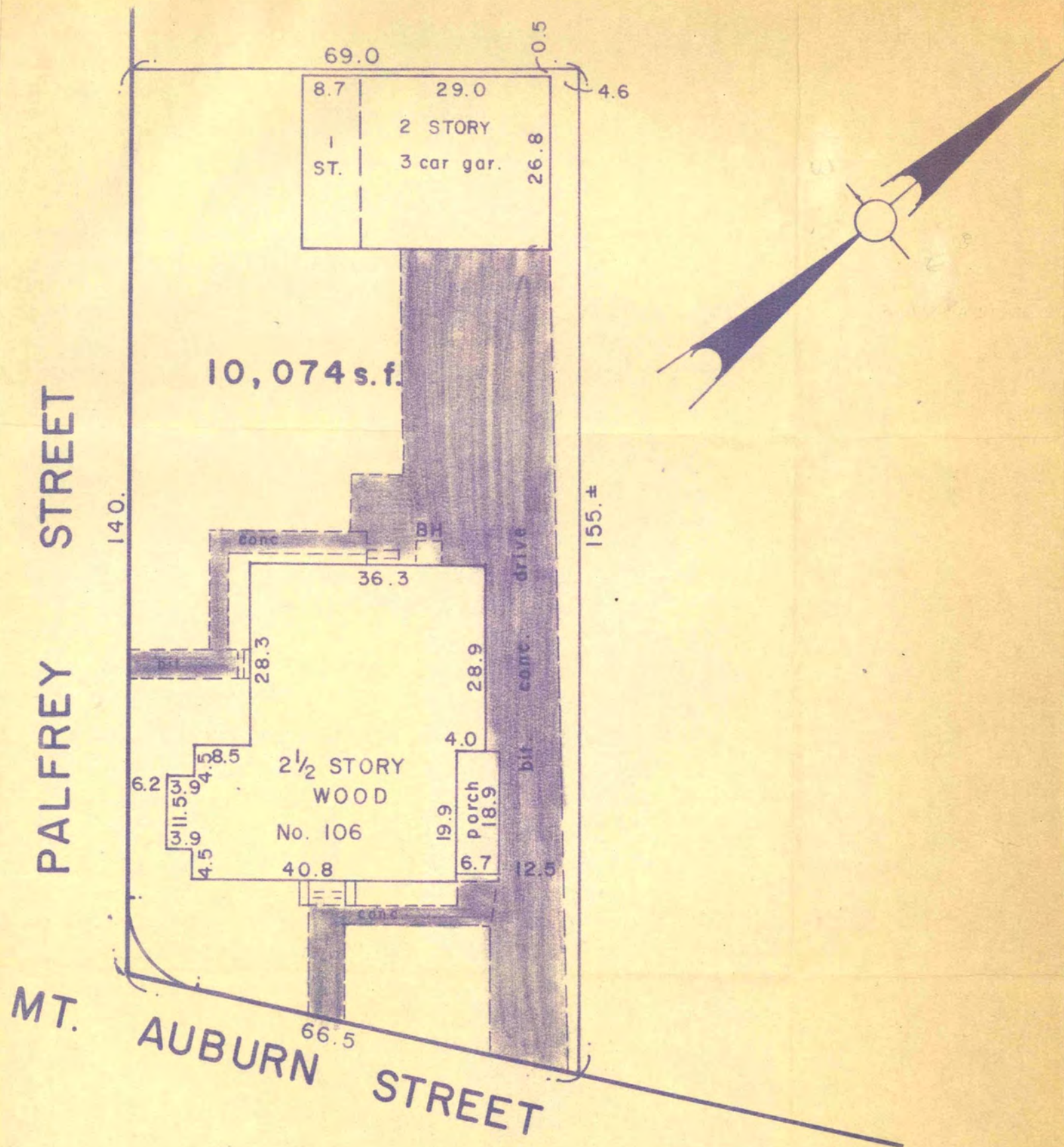
NO
PARKING
ANY
TIME
←

Pratt House

106 Mount Auburn Street
Watertown, Massachusetts

Heli Meltsner
10 Channing Place
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Facade



106 MT. AUBURN ST.

WATERTOWN, MASS.

MILES PRATT HOUSE

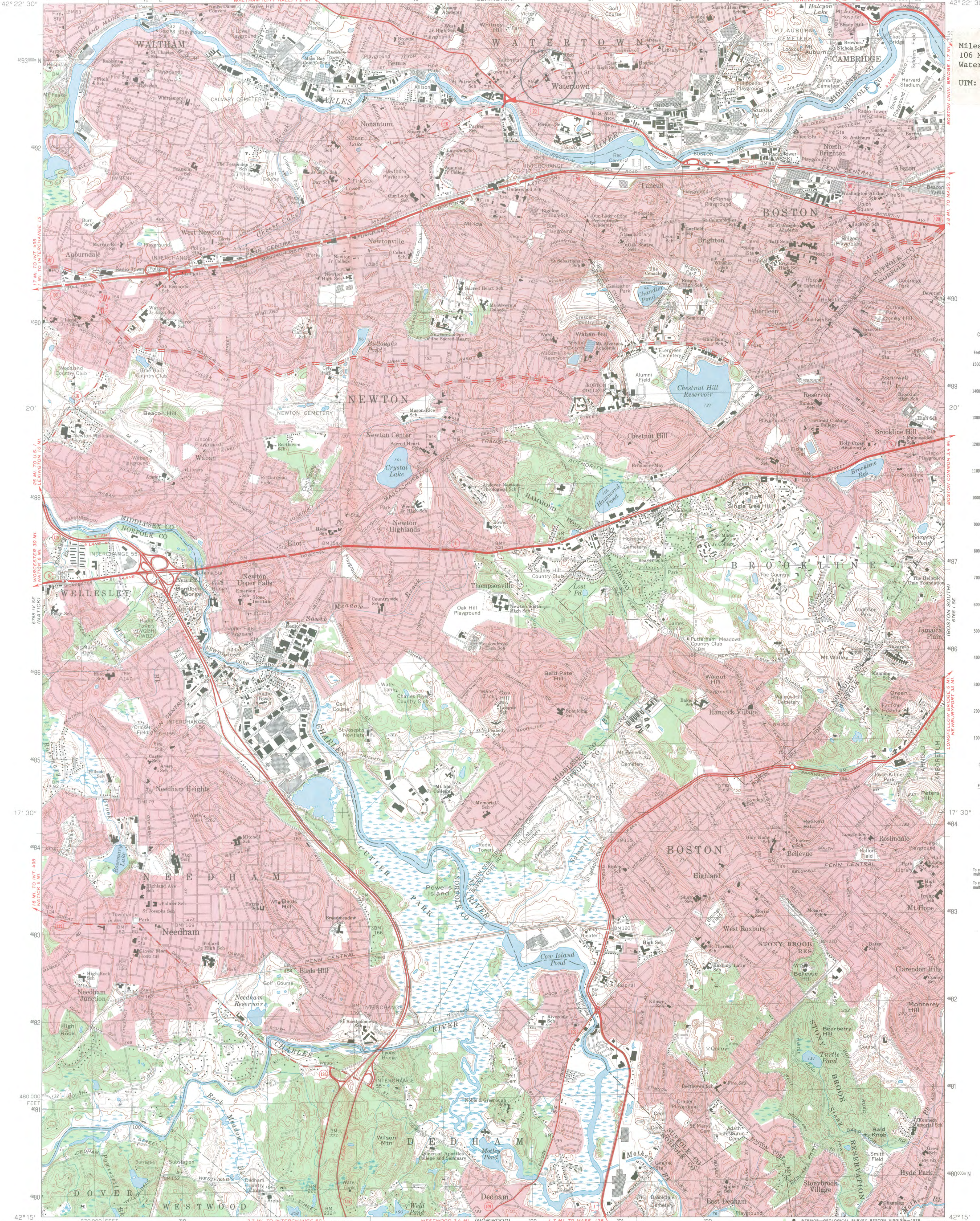
Scale: 20 Feet to an inch

MARCH 2, 1983

19/320460/4692680

SELWYN & KIRWIN ASSOC. - REG. LAND SURVEYORS

14 LINDEN AVE. — BELMONT, MASS.





The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Office of the Secretary of State
Michael Joseph Connolly, Secretary

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Valerie A. Talmage
Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

March 25, 1985

Ms. Carol Shull, Chief
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
Department of Interior
18th and C Streets, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed you will find the following nomination forms:

Black Tavern, Dudley Center Road, Dudley, MA.
1 property.

Duck Mill, 60 Duck Mill Road, Fitchburg, MA.
1 property. HPCA pending, # 0631-85-MA-85-0638.

Memorial Hall, School Street, Milford, MA.
1 property.

Miles Pratt House, 106 Mt. Auburn Street, Cambridge, MA.
1 property. HPCA pending, # 0413-83-MA-83-0402.

All have been voted eligible by the State Review Board and have been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. Owners were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30-75 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment. Comments received to date are attached to the nomination forms.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "May Kate Larson for Sarah Zimmerman".

Sarah J. Zimmerman
Director, Preservation Planning
Massachusetts Historical Commission

SJZ/lis
enclosure